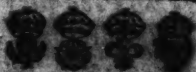


A
DECLARATION
FROM THE
COMMISSION
OF
The Generall Assembly.

Wherein
The stumbling blocks laid before the peo-
ple of G O D by their enemies
are removed;

Compliance with these enemies is
reprehended;

And
Courage and constancie in the Cause of
G O D against them, seriously recom-
mended and enjoyned.



EDINBURGH:
Printed by *Evan Tyler*, Printer to the
Kings most Excellent Majestie. 1646.

Dec. 1645



St Andr. 26. Decemb. 1645.

THe Estates of Parliament now conveened in the first Session of this first triennall Parliament, Having heard the Declaration presented unto them by the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly read in their audience, received the samen cheerfully as a seasonable Declaration, and appoints the samen to be Printed and published, and ordains the Earle of Cassils Vice President of Parliament, to give thanks from the Parliament to the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly for their care, pains, and vigilancie exprest thereintill.

Alex. Gibsone Cler. Registri.

St Andr. 11. Decemb. 1645.

THe Commissioners of the Generall Assembly Do Ordain this Declaration to be forthwith Printed and published, and sent to Presbyteries with all diligence, and requires each Presbytery immediatly after the receipt thereof, to take speedie course for the reading of it in every congregation within their bounds upon the Lords day after the Forenoon Sermon and before the Blessing; And that they report account of their diligence herein with the first conveniencie.

A. Ker.





St Andrews 11. Decemb. 1645.

*A Declaration from the Commission of
the Generall Assembly.*

IT hath been our constant custome and continuall care, from the sence of the trust committed unto us, to give warning unto this Kirk and Kingdom of their condition and dutie; and it cannot be but very seasonable and necessary at this time, to declare and make known our judgement of the carriage of the people of the Land, in the day of darknesse and hour of temptation, that they who have stood may finde matter of encouragement and praise, and such as have fallen may recover themselves and repent.

We were void of understanding if we should not observe, and more then ungrate if we should not acknowledge the loving kindnesse of the Lord towards us, in the midst of our confusions and fears: Temptations were many and fierce, because of the power and pride of an insolent enemy, whose blasphemies and crueltie is matter of abomination unto this, and shall be a wonder unto the following generation,

yet was there a remnant who reserved their integrity, entertaining all thoughts of backsliding and complying with the adversary with indignation and detest, patiently suffering the spoiling of their goods, the losse of their friends, and expence of their blood; standing to the Cause of God in the midst of difficulties and straits, neither fearing the threats nor regarding the promises of such as oppose the famine: These, as they be for a name of joy and praise unto the most high, the excellencie of whose power is persited in weaknesse; so for a witnesse unto the Truth and to the work of Reformation, and for a shame and reproach unto the haters of Zion, whose subtilty and violence is more then conquered by the faith and patience of the Saints. We cannot but think that unto such the testimony of integrity from within must needs be more comfortable, then the remembrance of any sufferings or losses from without can be grievous; and are perswaded, that as their name is precious amongst men, so shall their reward be great in heaven.

Yet is it matter of much sorrow and astonishment unto us, that in the land of uprightnesse so many should have done foolishly, and notwithstanding of all that work of power and mercy which their eyes have seen, and of their own vows and promises fallen from their excellencie, and turned aside unto corrupt and crooked wayes with the workers of iniquity. The bond of the Covenant is such, as every religious heart cannot but remember the violation thereof with horreur and trembling; yet hath the Oath of God been forgotten and despised by many. It were but
the

the renewing of our grief, and tedious unto the hearers, to reckon up all those things wherein men miscarried in the day of tryall; neither can we attain the knowledge of all the hidden things of dishonesty, which hate the light, and love to vail themselves under a shadow of secrecie and darknesse: We desire every man to turn his eyes upon himself, and to read in his own conscience whether his carriage hath been in all things answerable unto that which he swore unto the Lord. It beseems our compassion, and is worthy of our care, to lay open the causes and evil of this defection, *that we may with meeknesse instruct those that have fallen or opposed themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance unto the acknowledging of the truth.*

It is the admirable way of the working of the wisdom of God, to over-rule all the purposes and actions of the sons of men unto his own ends: He whose wayes towards us have all been mercy and truth, meant a discoverie of those whose indifferencie or treachery would ere long have procured a sure and sensible ruine unto us; and now hath he brought his purpose to passe. This is a mercy which being rightly managed may countervail all our sufferings and pains, and prove very wholsome unto the Land and advantageous unto the Cause of God.

It is not any strength of reason on the side of our adversaries that could have shaken so many; their pretexts of the Kings service, our Rebellion, and such like, as they are poore and void of truth in themselves, so do they easily evanish before every discerning and rationall man. The service of Kings is

not to cut down thousands of their faithfull and loyal subjects, whose multitude is their glory and strength, but to do those things which the Laws of the Kingdom prescribe, and that are consonant unto the will of God, and unto the wealth of the people, whose safety is the supream Law and main studie of every King ruling in righteousness and judgement. Our souls are not privie unto, and our actions plead us innocent from the guilt of Treason and Rebellion; *our witnesse is in heaven, and our record is on high*, that it was never our purpose or intention to subvert lawfull Soveraigntie, nor to encroach upon any of the due rights and priviledges of the same, and we trust that whiles we live nothing shall escape us to the contrary.

We are able to justifie our union with *England*, as an undenyable testimonie of our dutie unto our brethren in the time of their straits by the Popish and Prelaticall partie, as a necessary mean of our own defence, and of the preservation of Religion in its purity and power in this, and of its Reformation in the neighbour Lands, and furest bulwark of a stable and continuing peace betwixt the Kingdoms. The League and Covenant with *England*, as it was studied and set on foot in the dayes of our fathers at *Barnwick* in the year 1586; so was it from the beginning of this glorious work of Reformation endeavoured by our selves, as stands upon record in the Articles of the large Treatie, unto which some of those who have now fallen to oppose it, were then neither strangers nor adversaries. Both Covenants, in regard of the principals whence they issue, the heads which they contain,

contain, and the ends which they pursue, are one and the same : And that the extent of the last unto our dear brethren in *England* should procure enmitie to the intentions and substance of the first, seems to us to be a riddle, which none can resolve but perfidious Rebels who have made shipwrack of a good conscience.

Who can but be amazed to hear the treacherous designs and bloody practices of perjured men, palliat under a pretence of the prosecution of the ends of our nationall Covenant : We know that *James Grahame* then Earle of *Montrose*, now an excommunicate and forefaulted Traitor, did with tears in his eyes, and both his hands lifted up to heaven, swear unto the Lord in the publike assembly of his people to build those things which he now destroyes, and to destroy those things which he now builds ; though the Kings Majestie, of whose authority he now pretends to be so zealous, had not then given his royall consent and approbation unto our affairs: But we do as well know that he proved unstable, and light as water : His ambition, as it made him impatient of his own condition, and of the estimation of those of better deserving then himself, so to hearken to the promises of the Court, and to studie a faction within, and to entertain secret correspondence and intelligence with the adverse partie without the Kingdom. And though those his base and treacherous wayes were divers times discovered, yet did he still drive his own crooked designs, untill at length he was shut up in prison, where if he had not met with more mercie then justice, the due reward of his iniquitie had

had anticipate all that mischief which hee now acts.

Not long after his enlargement (contrary to his own promise and Act of Parliament thereanent) he betook himself to Court, where to the utmost of his wit and power he did foment and maintain that unnaturall and bloody War, set on foot by the malignant partie in *England*, against his Majesties loyall subjects there, contrary to the Articles of the large Treatie betwixt the Kingdoms; and laboured to beget and increase jealousies in the Kings minde concerning the intention of his subjects in this land: Neither did he satisfie himself with private whisperings, but was so impudent as to present to his Majestie and the pretended Parliament at *Oxford*, a railing Libell, wherein he accuseth our Parliaments and Committees (which have been in ail things most tender of the Kings just greatnesse and authority) as treacherous in their proceedings, and the solemne League and Covenant (which hath been a mean of many blessings and much consolation unto the Lords people) as damnable, Offering himself and the utmost of his endeavours against the same; And never did he cease untill he obtained a Commission for invading his native Countrey, and came within the confines thereof in an hostile way; whence he was shamefully repulsed and forced to flee back into *England*, where he found cold entertainment of his own partie, because his successe had not answered his undertakings.

Whilest himself was now despised, and his hopes forlorn in both Nations, this Kingdome was invaded
in

in the North by a base and barbarous Crue of Irish Rebels, drunk with the blood of our Brethren in Ireland, and sworn enemies, not onely to our Covenant, but to our Profession it self : yet so strongly did the spirit of Satan (to whom he was now delivered) work in that wretched Man, that he did rather choose to associat himself unto those, than to fail in the attaining of his mischievous ends. With those, and some of our unnaturall Countrey men, void of Religion and humanitie, hath he earen the flesh, and drunk the blood of that Land that gave him life, spoyled that People with whom he was in Covenant, and preyed upon that Church in which he was baptized: neglect of the worship of God, countenancing of Idolaters, complying with Papists, burning of Houses and Corn, imprisoning and killing of Ministers, ravishing of Women, murdering of old and young, and contemning the highest censures of the Kirk, are but things of small consequence and care with him: This is the Man who would make the world believe, that he stands for the Nationall Covenant : Every one whose eyes are not blinded by the god of this world, cannot but entertain this his Profession, so contrary to sense and reason, with derision and contempt.

Successe, as it argues not the equitie of our adversaries cause, so neither the iniquitie of ours : *No man knowes either love or hatred by that which is before him* : Successe is not the touch-stone of Truth, but Truth of Successe : Israel may fall before the Philistims, yea, the Ark may be taken by the Philistims : And what wonder though we have fallen, & been smitten by the basest of men: they were the rod of the Lords anger, and

the staff in their hand was his indignation, because of our contempt of the Gospel, ingratitude, confidence in the arm of flesh, murmurings and repinings, delaying of Justice, walking unanswerable to the Covenant, and the like, were such instruments armed against us, to correct us, and harden themselves unto the day of their just destruction.

For these *transgressions also of Jacob*, and for these *sins of the house of Israel*, did the Lord shut out our prayers, and cover himself with a cloud of indignation, that our Petitions could not passe through, and not for meddling with the Kings Castles and Rents. His Castles have alwayes been imployed for the safetie of the Kingdome, his Rents have not been medled with since the Pacification, neither yet before it, but for a publick use, which was afterward approven by the King himself. And they who would now fasten this upon us, as a cursed thing, may remember that themselves were accessorie thereunto. Neither yet were our Prayers without a return of mercy in the day of our deepest distresse: The Work of Reformation (which is of greater esteem with us than our own things) did prosper in the hand of his servants, and we trust, that even these Prayers which were derided by the wicked, shall in due time return in showres of vengeance upon the heads of our enemies, whereof we have already comfortable experience.

It is our hearts desire and hope, that all this course of providence, thus abused by men void of understanding, may be improven by our selves as a mean of serious and sound humiliation, that we may search and try our wayes, and turn again unto the Lord, who will do

do good unto us, because of the railing of our adversaries; notwithstanding of all calumnies and reproaches, the righteousness of our cause shall be counted of us our glory, and in regard of it, we will not remove our integrity from us: our righteousness we will still hold fast, and not let it go, and our heart shall not reproach us so long as we live; yea, though our adversaries would write a book against us, surely we would take it on our shoulder, and bind it as a crown unto us.

The true and real causes of our back-sliding are to be sought amongst our selves. If all the Watchmen of the house of Israel had bin faithful & zealous in discharge of their trust, then had the Lords people better known the excellency of the Gospel, & stuck closer to the profession of the same, because of the negligence and perversnes of some of those, have many halted for want of instruction & lack of knowledge; but from the corruptions which men have harboured in their own breasts, hath mainly issued all the degrees of their declination.

There be amongst us many rotten and hollow hearts, who though they joyned with us through subtiltie or fear, did still abide in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, and wished nothing more, than the subversion of our cause: What wonder though such took advantage of a prevailing party, to disclose their envy, wherewith they were now growne big, almost unto bursting. And there is a generation whose ignorance and sloath hath detained them, that they have not sufficiently examined, nor rightly considered Zions controversie with those that plead against her, because of her love to the Truth: They conceive the debate to be about things civil, at least, not to go so

high as the hazard of any thing important in Religion. And such is the negligence of those, that they despise the meanes of instruction, largely offered, and holden forth unto them in many Warnings, and Declarations, which they will not be at the pains to peruse: Love to the things of the world, hath stumbled men of earthly mindes, who had rather choose to endanger their souls, and make shipwrack of a good conscience, than to suffer the spoyleing of their Goods, and ruine of their Estates: And Atheisme prevailes in many, which as it is not acquainted with the excellencie of JESUS CHRIST, nor with the preciousnesse and sweetnesse of his wayes, so hath it no regard to his Commandments to obey them, nor respect to his Gospel, to suffer any thing for it. And seeing formalitie and profanitie abounds, is it not just with GOD to send them strong delusion to *believe lies*, who do not receive the Truth in love. And what if some being puffed up in mind, have trusted to the power of their own strength, and neglected to imploy that mighty One, upon whom our help is laid.

Though we cannot but think, that all such as are not given up to delusion and hardnesse of heart, have already begun to consider the evill of their wayes, and to remember their inconstancie with detestation and sorrow, yet, for convincing of the obstinate, reclaiming of the more flexible, and increasing of the repentance of those who desire to loathe themselves, because of their back-sliding, we cannot but discover the guiltinesse that many involved themselves into, in the houre of temptation that came upon the Land. As there

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there be degrees of duties in the Covenant, so degrees
of offences against the same. We would have none so
grosse to plead innocencie, because they have not
broke forth in open opposition: Indifferencie and neu-
trality is no lesse against our Oath, then professed
enimities. And what also if it be as odious in the sight
of G O D, who spues the lukewarme out of his
mouth? How then shall we judge of back-sliding and
expresse malignancie? Surely disobedience unto pub-
lick order, or prevarication in the same, commending
of adversaries their purpose, power, or carriage, tradu-
cing the Instruments and Work of Reformation, be
but the bitter fruits of an evill heart, dis-affected to
the truth, & cleaving to the love of the paths of those,
who study the obstruction and dis-appointment of all
those ends designed in the Covenant: Silence when we
had a calling to speak: Setting on of Bonfires: Preparing
entertainment for the Rebels, and receiving them into
our Houses, are but at the best sinfull temporizing in
an evill time, a betraying of our zeal for the Lord, a
strengthening of the ungodly in their wicked courses,
and yeelding unto them a ground of hope for further
complying with them, and an high contempt of the
dreadfull sentence of Excommunication, if any of
those with whom fellowship was kept, were un-
der the same. Intelligence and correspondence with
the Enemy, furnishing them with Men, Money, Hor-
ses, Ammunition, or Cloathes, seducing of the people,
receiving Commissions, or executing the same, and
joyning in actuall service. Those things if done out of
affection, and not through fear, as some of them hard-
ly can be, are sure tokens of a heart desperately per-

verse, and wholly malignant, which esteems it but a light thing to hazard upon expresse perjury, and howsoever done, draw upon the doers a manifest breach of Covenant, and fearfull guilt of helping those whom the Lord hates..

What though it be lawfull in some cases to capitulate, yea with Turks or Pagans; shall it therefore be lawfull to do that which may argue subjection and imply submission unto a perfidious Rebell, and the sworn enemy of the League and Covenant with England, going about to drive the people of the Land from their dutie for the Covenant, to a compliance with him against it. In this case, all & every one are called unto the asserting of the confession of their Faith, and of their own innocencie and righteousness in joyning with England: Both which they do betray and condemn, and take with that guiltinesse of Treason and Rebellion, which the Adversaries would fasten upon them, when they capitulate to do any thing inconsistent with open and profest enmitie, or that tends unto the disserving of those duties to which the Covenant doth oblige them: Such Capitulations must needs be very foolish, and contrary to the Covenant. Neither can we judge any better of Protections from such an Enemy, because they do imply the authority of one who is forfeit by the State, and excommunicat by the Kirk, and do either expressely or tacitely engage the Receivers, if not to joyne, yet not to resist; they lay a stumbling block before all the Inhabitants of the Land, to make them forbear action, or decline suffering, by following such a course: If all had done so, it may soon be foreseen what should have been the

end; Though haply they who were the doers, were not so apprehensive as to reach the depth of the evil, yet the end of the work in it self, and in the intention of enemies, was to make them Masters of all the lives and estates within the Land.

of Capitulations and Protections, howsoever accounted of by those who walk after the wisdom of the flesh, are destructive to our Covenant, almost in all the Heads and Articles thereof: They tend unto the corrupting of Religion in this Land, and obstructing the Work of Reformation in England, unto the countenancing and strengthening of the Popish and Prelaticall party, unto the subversion of the due Rights and Priviledges of the Parliaments, and diminishing of his Majesties just greatnesse and authority, unto the withdrawing of Incendiaries and Malignants from condigne punishment, unto the overthrow of the Union betwixt the Kingdoms, unto the deserting of our Brethren, following of divisive motions, and denying to hazard or suffer the losse either of lives or estates in the defence of the Cause, and them that adhere thereunto. Wee see not any strength of reason in that seeming necessity, unto which many pretend themselves to have been redacted: If men could not have retired from the fury and violence of the Enemy, or had not some probable way of resistance and defence against the same, they should have taken it as an evidence of the will of G O D, calling them to suffer and give a testimony unto his Truth. Our Covenant doth no lesse oblige us to suffering, than to doing; and it is the ignorance or ineffectuall consideration of our dutie that makes us thus to wipe our mouthes, as if we
had

had done nothing worthy of rebuke: Neither yet
doth it excuse, that some were not afflicke to obtaine
Protection, the receiving of them was to prostitute
the chastitie of that affection which we owe unto the
Cause of GOD, and could be no better than a bribe
that blinds the eyes of the wise, and hinders from do-
ing judgement unto the afflicted.

The deep apprehension of their souls danger, moves
us seriously, and in the bowels of Iesus CHRIST, to
intreat all Temporizers and Back-sliders to remember
whence they are fallen, and to repent. Let it not be a
light thing unto such, that they have despised the
Word of GOD, under-valued the precious Truth of
the Gospel, and drawne upon themselves the guilt of
their Brethrens blood, by forsaking them in their just
defence. If the due sense of their sin shall bring them
to lament after the Lord, they may hope to finde him
gracious and mercifull, to forgive their iniquity, and
heal their back-slidings. But if they shall harden
themselves, and continue in their provocation, they
have cause of feare that the Lord of Hostes shall avenge
the quarrell of his Covenant upon them who have
sworn falsly by his Name.

Yet is it not that those alone have cause to mourn,
All the Land have done foolishly, and provoked the
holy One of Israel unto wrath: The Lord hath been
glorious in the midst of us, but who hath regarded his
work, or considered the operation of his hands?
Though he hath been liberall in the offer of his love,
yet few have believed the Gospel, and Audied to walk
worthy of the Name of Iesus CHRIST: much rather
been knowne as benighted, who hath valued him in
the

the excellencie of his Person, or imployed him in the
 vertue of his Offices? Holy duties have been negle-
 cted, and piety and godlinesse reproached: Is there not
 cause to lament for the Atheisme, ignorance of GOD,
 blaspheming of his Name, swearing by them that are
 no gods, intemperancie, uncleannesse, deceit, and op-
 pression that prevailes amongst many? And should
 not our eyes run down with tears, because of jealou-
 si-s, self seeking, and obstructing of Justice amongst
 our Judges, because of rioting and excesse, spoyling
 and oppressing amongst our Souldiours, because of ne-
 gligence and profanitie amongst Ministers, because
 of murmurings & grudgings, deep security, carnal con-
 fidence, neutralitie, & lukewarmnesse almost amongst
 all. The Covenant which hath been attended by a
 stately work of more than ordinary providence, and
 sealed with many rich and precious blessings from
 Heaven, is by many under-valued and set at naught;
 nay, by some blasphemed, as an accursed and unholy
 thing. Because of those things, thousands have fallen
 by the Sword, and ten thousands by the Pestilence,
 our high-ways are desolate, and our Cities left with-
 out inhabitants, the like hath not been heard in our
 dayes, nor in the dayes of our Fathers: And yet the
 wrath of the Lord is not turned away, but his hand is stret-
 ched out still. O that men were wise to hear the voice of
 the rod, and who hath appointed it! Shall we continue to
 tempt the most High, and strive with our Maker until
 he make an end of us? Let us confesse our iniquity, and
 be humbled for our sin, let us sowe to our selves in righteous-
 nesse, and reap in mercy, let us break up our fallow ground,
 for it is time to seek the Lord, untill he come and rain righte-
 ousnesse upon us.

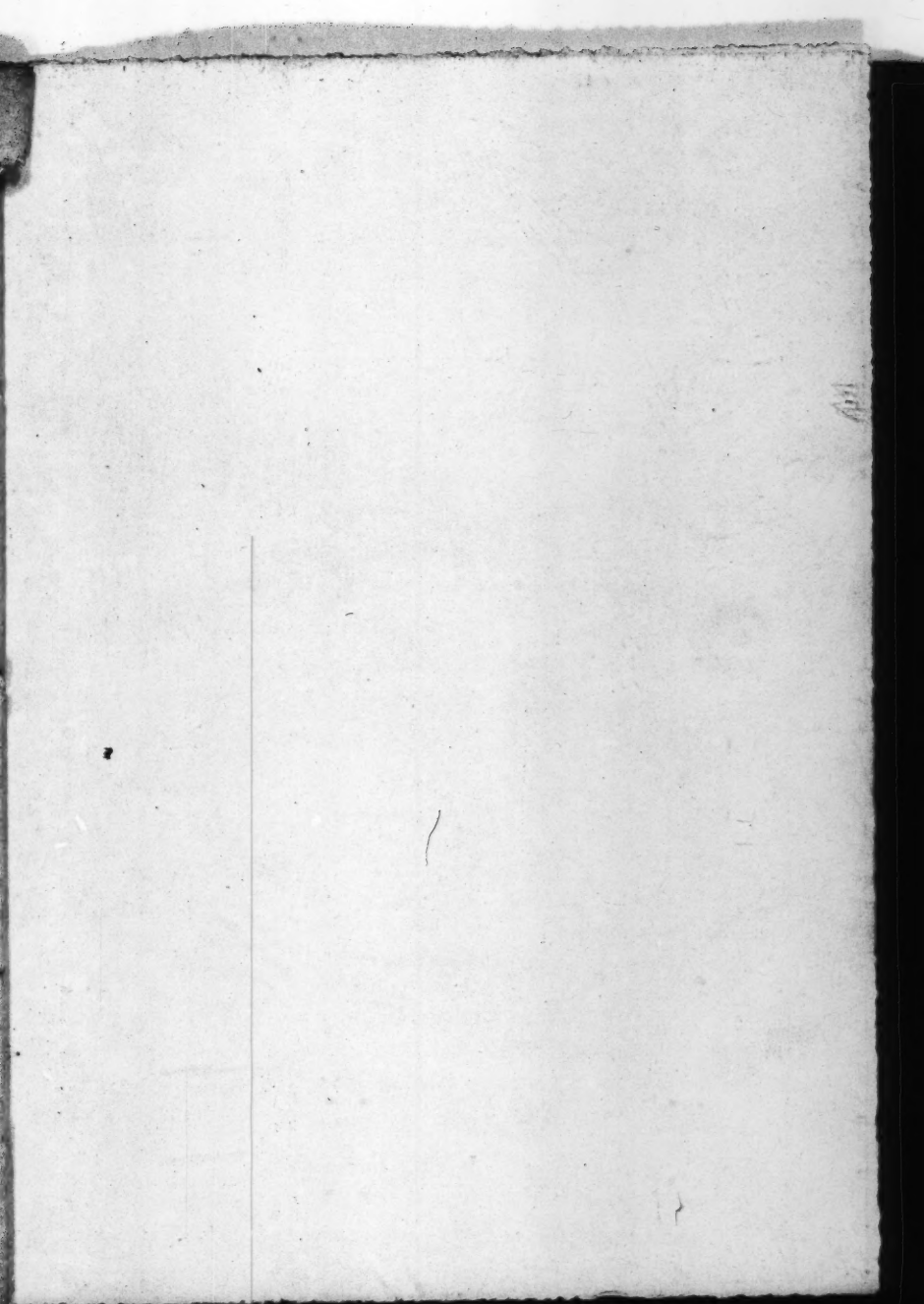
We cannot but from the sense of those judgements that lyes heavy upon the Land , and from that wrath that still threatens us, warne every man to repent and let on to dury. Let Rulers and Judges do judgment, and execute Justice without respect of persons : Let Officers and Souldiours live soberly , do violence to no man, and more minde the Cause of G O D, than their own advantage : Let Pastors feed the flock of CHRIST in love , be zealous in advancing the Work of Reformation, and purging of the House of G O D: And let every one in his station , minde those things whereunto the Lord hath called him. Though we be afflicted and sore broken , yet if wee return unto the Lord, he will have mercy on us, and heal us ; Hath he not already begun to revive us, and to raise us up :

It is a mercy worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance, that in the day of the power & pride of our cruell and insolent Enemies, the Lord should have shewed himself glorious & mighty, to give victory & salvation to his people, when our hopes were near gone: We were in a low condition, not onely at the weakest, but even at the worst, under the guilt of many provocations, repining against the Lord , and halting to the pathes of the Destroyer: yet the Preserver of men had regard unto us, to keep us from destruction, and to ease and avenge us of many of our adversaries, whose carcasses he made as dung unto the earth in the day of his fury and indignation. If after so great a mercy, any should bee found amongst us to turn away from the Lord, and again to submit unto , or comply with the Enemies of his Truth , they could not but sin against their own souls , and provoke the eyes of his glory
untill

until there were no remedy. We beseech all the Lords People throughout the Land, may we Charge them before G O D and the Lord J E S U S C H R I S T, who shall judge the quick and the dead, to hold fast the Truth in love, to have regard to the glory of the Son of G O D, the excellency of the Gospel, the sacred and inviolable Bond of the Covenant, the beauty of the Work of Reformation, and the worth of a good Conscience, above all earthly losses and advantages; and from the due sense and apprehension of those things, to arme themselves with strong resolutions against all the degrees of back-sliding or complying with the Enemy, That they be no more as Reeds shaken with the winde, but that they may give a proof of their Faith, Patience and Courage, in the midst of all the difficulties and straits which they shall meet with. Every one who knowes the Lord, will cleave to their duty, and wait for his salvation: *He is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. The rod of the wicked shall not rest too long upon the lot of the righteous.* But when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and upon Ferusalem, he will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the proud Enemy, and bring down the glory of his high looks: Then shall all the haters of Zion be astonished and confounded, but the Lords People shall be glad and rejoyce in his salvation.

Rev.

FINIS.



3,4- The service of King is-

4 all the league at Berwick in 1586 (Calderwood)

5 Montrose-

7. What success means-

CHURCH of Scotland - General Assembly, 1646

A declaration from the Commission of the
General Assembly. Whence the stumbling
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their enemies are removed...

Edinburgh, Evan Tyler, 1646.

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